

EPA– Specific Examples & Language for Feedback

The following examples are tailored for the EPA community and are meant to be relevant and reflective of their lived experiences at Region 8. These examples are meant to be incorporated into the 4-hour Bystander Intervention Workshops. Through guided activities, participants will also have opportunities to contribute relevant examples and practice solutions.

Red Dot Scenarios

The following examples may be used in activities in which participants will identify associated barriers to intervention and in generating realistic bystander intervention strategies:

- While inspecting a construction site, a contractor makes several sexist comments to your coworker, who is a female engineer. He keeps directing engineering questions to your male coworker. When you tell him that she is the engineer, he says, "You're the engineer? I didn't know ladies could do that."
- Two of your coworkers are discussing an upcoming deliverable and have a heated disagreement about its format. As they develop the deliverable, one of them stops communicating with the other, ignoring emails and refusing to accept editing suggestions.
- You overhear some colleagues discussing the recent reorganization. Someone says, "All of these baby boomers are taking jobs that could be filled by younger, more productive employees. It's time for them to go."
- In a meeting, one of your colleagues suggests assigning a GS-12 employee a certain task. The manager at the meeting dismisses the suggestion saying, "I can't have someone who is incompetent working on this project."
- At lunch, a new SEE asks a coworker how to do a specific task. Before answering, your coworker mumbles, "Looks like management hired another senile admin." However, the task is actually pretty challenging and the new SEE hasn't been trained on it yet.
- A new scientist who is a person of color joins your team. You overhear one of your coworkers saying, "Oh great, another diversity hire."
- During annual performance review season, you overhear a manager berating an employee. After hearing her slamming her hand on the conference table, she gets up and slams the door to the conference room.
- You're in the field conducting an inspection with a coworker. As she is doing the inspection, one of the engineers keeps making comments like "nice view" while looking at her backside.
- At a conference, a tenured scientist keeps approaching the same young, female project manager. He frequently compliments her on her appearance, brings her drinks, and flirts with her, and you can tell it makes her very uncomfortable.
- One of your coworkers made a harassment report against your manager. While walking past the conference room, you hear a group of managers gossiping about it. One of them says, "Her career at EPA is dead in the water from here on out."
- While on Lync, you see a meme posted by a colleague. It's obviously making fun of someone else on your team. Below the meme, other coworkers are making negative comments and insults.

Barriers

In addition to more universally recognized bystander barriers (e.g., not liking confrontation, being shy, worried about being embarrassed, assuming someone else will take care of the issue, etc.) the following barriers are tailored and will be incorporated into the curriculum.

- Intervention isn't the norm at EPA and you don't want to go against the grain
- Not wanting to take a side in conflict
- Group pressure to laugh at a joke or engage in banter
- Target/person harmed doesn't want a big deal made of it
- Could interfere with career advancement such as a promotion
- Fear of retribution/retaliation
- Lack of faith in the reporting process
- You don't want to violate an EPA policy
- Pressure to stay in one's own lane, especially if a leader is causing harm
- Perceived lack of power because of your position or job title
- Assumption that someone else will intervene or that management will take care of it
- Fear of being labeled as a whistleblower
- Don't want to harm the reputation of the EPA or other federal agencies
- Fear of drawing more attention to one's race, age, or gender in an environment that lacks diversity

Realistic Bystander Interventions / Reactive Green Dots

The following are tailored examples of realistic bystander intervention strategies and will be incorporated into the curriculum as examples.

Direct:

- "I've noticed this and it makes me uncomfortable. Does it make you uncomfortable too?"
- "That coaching session seemed to get heated. Is everything okay?"
- "I don't know if you realized it but that thing you did made the rest of the team feel pretty uncomfortable. It might be worth apologizing."
- Attempt to de-escalate the situation by calling a time or convening a "hallway talk" so that one or both people involved can calm down
- "Are you ok? I saw what happened. How can I support you?"

Delegate:

- Union rep
- Human resources
- A trusted manager or tenured employee
- A coworker who knows the people involved better than you do
- Security or front desk person
- An assertive colleague

Distract:

- Change the subject.
- Do a walk-by and engage in conversation with them and their cube neighbors
- Invite the person being targeted to get a cup of coffee or to come to happy hour
- Insert yourself in the situation

- Pretend that you need help of some kind—the printer is broken, the coffee machine won't work

Proactive Behaviors / Proactive Green Dots

The following examples of proactive behaviors will be given as examples to begin to set norms for a healthy and safe work environment.

- Green Dot (or other anti-harassment messaging) lanyards, pins, stickers, etc.
- E-mail signature lines – commitment to healthy workplace, bystander commitment, etc.
- Talking about the issue on Lync, e-mail, blog, videos (intranet)
- Conversations
- Sharing values in meetings
- Connecting Green Dot values to EPA and/or union values
- Incorporating prevention/Green Dot language into regular staff meetings or other touch points with subordinates or co-workers
- Sharing commitment to a safe and healthy workplace with colleagues
- Speak positively about Green Dot/prevention/training